The Old Paths

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"Some Things Baptism Doesn't Do ..."

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Baptism is key to pleasing God in this life. In fact, it is so important, that the Bible says that one must be baptized in order to be saved from past sins (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). We need to instruct people in this truth if we are going to save a population who is dying in sin daily (Mk. 16:15; II Tim. 2:2). Since we studied about baptism and its necessity for saving lost people last week, let us take a moment to understand that there are some things that baptism does not do.

Baptism Does Not …

Make A Minor An Adult

In other words, if a young boy is convicted by the Scripture he hears, believes on Christ, repents of his sin, confesses Christ and is baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10; I Pet. 3:21), then he is forgiven of His sin, and becomes a Christian. Baptism, however, does not make him a man! Nor does a girl following the Lord's plan of salvation become a woman just because she is baptized *"for the remission of sins."*

We certainly rejoice with the angels when someone comes to Christ, recognizing his/her soul's lost condition and wants to be right with God. Yes, this shows a young person is thinking right. However, this does not mean that this 9, 10, 12, 13, etc. year-old is now a grown man or a grown woman!

I think this is necessary to study because at times, when young boys become Christians, there are some who become concerned that a woman can no longer teach them without violating I Timothy 2:11-12. This cannot be the case, for when we define the word "man" as I Timothy 2:11-12 uses it, we find this term meaning, "with reference to sex, and so to distinguish a man from a woman … with reference to age as to distinguish an adult man from a boy" (Thayer's, p. 45). In other words, the "man" of I Timothy 2 was an adult male, not a "boy"! Again, to speak of a "man" in this text, "stands in distinction from a woman … as distinct from a boy or infant" (Vine's). Therefore, if we know the difference between an infant, a child, and a man or a woman, then we can understand that Paul (inspired of the Holy Spirit) was forbidding a woman from usurping authority *"over the man"* (not a boy) in I Timothy 2:11-12.

For further study, note that Jesus was called a *"child"* at one time (Lk. 2:42-43)!! In this passage, Jesus was twelve years old and called a child. If we believe in "calling Bible things by Bible names," then let us be consistent and call 12 year-old boys and girls children, as the Bible does!

Yes, baptism forgives us from sin (Acts 2:38), puts us in a right relationship with God, and gives us new life (Rom. 6:3-4). But, baptism does not change the age or maturity level of anyone. Baptism does not turn boys and girls into men and women.

Make An Unscriptural Marriage Scriptural

For years, it has been taught that one who is not a Christian is "not amenable" (subject to) the law of Christ in reference to His law on marriage, divorce, and remarriage (Source: The Divorced and Remarried Who Would Come To God, p. 49-50). Yet, when Jesus spoke, He spoke to *"whosoever …"* (Matt. 5:32, 19:9). He did not speak only to those already in His kingdom. The things Christ spoke were words to which all would be "amenable", else the sinner is not subject to anything Christ said! Think for a moment: "Who" is it that must hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized? Is it not those who are not Christians? Are not all people (Christians and non-Christians) going to be judged by Christ one day? Yes (II Thess. 1:6-9; Jn. 12:48)! If so, then all are subject to what Christ said, including what Christ said in Matthew 5:32, and 19:9! If a couple is living in an adulterous relationship before baptism, then they would still be in an adulterous relationship after baptism if they do not repent of the sin of living in adultery (Acts 2:38; Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30)!

Being married to someone you have no right to is a sin (Rom. 7:2-3). We cannot teach that someone who is baptized "washes away" past wives! Baptism will not make an unscriptural marriage scriptural.

Eliminate All Problems

Sometimes, folks treat baptism as if it is the "magic" cure to problems. Yes, baptism forgives us of sins, and puts us in a right relationship with God. Yet, baptism will not eliminate problems in

our lives. In fact, at times, one's baptism results in creating some problems he did not have before! This is because by making the decision to follow Christ, we are also making the decision to reject and shun the things of this world. When we do this, the world will hate us! Jesus stated this fact to the disciples in John 15:18-20. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said we are *"blessed"* when persecuted (Matt. 5:10-12). Later, James wrote, *"You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"* (Jas. 4:4). Obviously, when one becomes a Christian, he does not eliminate all problems from his life!

Guarantee Earthly Riches

Unlike what the so-called preachers of the "health and wealth" gospel say, when one becomes a Christian, this does not guarantee earthly riches! One needs only remember that, *"foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head"* (Lk. 9:58), and that *"a servant is not greater than his master"* (Jn. 15:20), in order to understand that becoming a Christian does nothing to guarantee earthly riches. Our Lord said, *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matt. 6:19-21). Yes, God promises to take care of His own (Matt. 6:33; Ps. 37:25), but this does not mean that due to the fact that one is a Christian, he receives a million dollars! A Christian's reward and riches await him in eternity, not now (Matt. 6:19; II Tim. 4:8-10; etc.)!

Add You To A Denominational Body

Please read this point carefully. I write this because sometimes folks who are raised up in denominations will say they were baptized (immersed) and are therefore, saved. What does the Bible say? The Bible says baptism is *"for the remission of sins,"* (Acts 2:38) not an "outward sign of an inward grace"! Upon being baptized, one is added to the Lord's church by God (Acts 2:47). Many denominational folks say they can be "saved" one day and added to the church on another day. Which way is the Bible way?

Furthermore, we see folks who say they were baptized for the purpose of being forgiven, but belong to a church unknown to the Scriptures. In such cases, let us be reminded that there is only *"one body"* (Eph. 4:4), and we can only be baptized *"into one body"* (I Cor. 12:13). Therefore, Bible baptism cannot add you to a denominational body anymore than baptism can be an "outward sign of an inward grace." Error taught, error heard, and error believed, is error obeyed. Truth taught, truth heard, and truth believed is truth obeyed! One cannot be taught wrong and baptized right! Anyone involved with denominational error must be taught the truth, they must repent, and they must be baptized for the remission of sins and into the one body of Christ if they are going to be right with God. (Just as those religiously zealous Jews did in New Testament days, Acts 2:22, 41; 4:4; 6:7; etc..) I recognize this is not what "everyone" says, but this is what the Bible says!

Take Temptation Away

Baptism does not grant immunity toward temptations and sin (Jas. 1:14-15). However, upon baptism, one has the right of prayer, and to know, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (I Jn. 1:9). Numerous times in the Scripture, Christians are reminded to be steadfast, faithful, not weary in well-doing, etc., so that we will not give up while on earth (I Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9).

No, baptism does not grant us immunity from temptation, but we now have an advocate in Jesus (I Jn. 2:1), and we have a way to escape provided for us (I Cor. 10:13). Let us all be thankful for such blessings, and be even more ready to wear the armor of God and fight the onslaught of Satan (Eph. 6:13-18) so that one day we can see Heaven!

Have <u>YOU</u> been baptized for the remission of sins? If not, why not?

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